HOPE;

A LECTURE

Delivered before the

BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

BY G. W. BLAGDEN, D. D.

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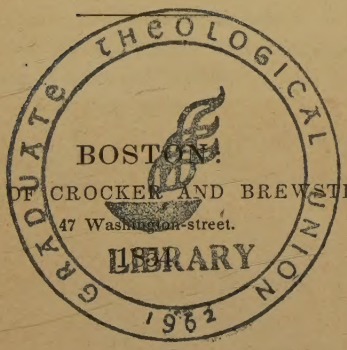
DELIVERED BEFORE THE

BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,

DECEMBER 8, 1853,

BY G. W. BLAGDEN.



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Boston, Dec. 20, 1853.

Rev. G. W. Blagden, D. D.

Dear Sir,—The undersigned, in behalf of the Young Men of the Old South Church and congregation, would tender to you their thanks for the able and instructive Lecture delivered by you before the Boston Young Men's Christian Association, and repeated, at our request, in the Old South Church on the 18th instant; and in compliance with the earnest desire of many who listened to you on those occasions, we would respectfully solicit a copy of your Lecture for publication.

In the sincere hope that you may accede to the wishes of those whom we represent, and thus extend the good already effected, we have the honor to be, with the highest sentiments of esteem and regard, most truly your friends,

GEORGE F. BIGELOW,
CHARLES BLAKE.

Boston, Dec. 22, 1853.

My dear Friends,—

I am much gratified to know, through you, that my late Lecture was so acceptable. It gives me much pleasure to comply with your request, in behalf of the Young Men of the Old South Church and congregation, and hand you a copy of it for publication.

Sincerely yours,

G. W. BLAGDEN.

Messrs. George F. Bigelow, M. D.
and Charles Blake, Esq.

LECTURE.

The strongest and most efficient stimulants to men are inward, and from the mind. We are like steam-engines, whose source of power is in that which is most spirit-like within them, —whatever may be the outward occasion of the inward force. And of all these stimuli, of the mind, hope is one or the most powerful:— one of the earliest exercised; one of the last to die. When it dies, despair follows: and then, most emphatically, is the beginning of the end of man's fairest prospects.

Of all seasons of life, youth is preëminently the one of hope; whether we regard the energy of the emotion as it is exercised by the young themselves;—or as it is felt by others, in their behalf, as they look on them with interest, and witness their efforts.

Hardly is there one young man, in this large and most respectable association, on whom the hearts of some domestic circle, larger or smaller,

do not continually rest, with an unspeakable interest and affection. A mother's or a father's spirit may be said to be upon him, 'with a power and with a spell.' A brother's or a sister's eye is ever intent on his movements. And relatives and friends constantly inquire after his welfare, or his woe. In the breasts of all, and each of these, hope may be said to be sweetly budding in respect to him.

He owes it to them, as truly as he owes it to God, and to himself, that the conditions, which may insure that the budding hope burst into the flower of fruition, shall be most faithfully fulfilled to the letter, so far as his agency is, in any degree, concerned. He owes it to himself, too, as well as to others, that this energy, as it springs up within him, shall be rightly, and therefore wisely directed, and lead to a happy end.

That this, by the blessing of God, may be the case with every one of you, allow me to ask your attention, this evening, to the nature and conditions of hope, as an element of energy in young men.

I. Hope is that emotion, in the exercise of which we look into the future, somewhat, as in the exercise of memory, we look backward on the past.

As it has been held by some respecting this latter faculty, that it may not be a distinct

power of the mind, but may depend for its energy on the strength of other powers;—thus at once constituting and explaining the different kinds of memory among men. Any one, for example, of a strong imagination remembering, with the greatest tenacity, poetic images;—and he, who has strong mathematical,—or another having as strong perceptive powers,—recollecting respectively, with a proportionable vigor, in the one case, figures, and proportions; and in the other, physical objects, scenes, and individuals. So hope, it may be, instead of being a distinct emotion, may depend, for its energy, on the exercise and degree of other powers. Its flowers may thus take the hues imparted by the nature of the soil in which they grow; and the atmosphere by which they are nourished.

In a mind full of executive ardor, it will be ever active in painting the scenes of executive success;—in one that is sensual, those of physical enjoyment;—in others who are intellectual, scenes of literary, or scientific invention, and discovery;—and in those, whose spiritual nature predominates, things that are unseen and eternal. In short, Hope dipping her pencil in the colors she finds prepared in the secret chambers of every soul, spreads them ever before it, in the most attractive forms, on the canvass of life, to assist, and animate, and give energy to its efforts!

Is there one before me who has not felt its power?—One, before whose glowing eye, she has not painted some of her enchanting and exhilarating scenes?—Hardly one! Or, if there be one,—dull and dreary must be his path of life; listless and low all his efforts to better his condition, or to be useful to his fellow men.

Without attempting to enter into the metaphysics of my subject, which would be undesirable here,—it is necessary, that we may understand fully the conditions of hope, to notice, more particularly, that it is a complex emotion; and may be defined with sufficient accuracy for our present purpose, to be desire, quickened by imagination, seeking its objects, in the use of appropriate means, under the apprehension of possible failure.

The handmaid of hope is imagination, which is ever conceiving of the scenes that the pencil of hope paints. And which, like hope itself, is strong in proportion to the power, or vigor, of the faculty, or propensity, in reference to which it operates. It is interesting to notice, that so far as the exercise of propensities connected only with the senses, or natural instincts is concerned,—even the brutes develope something like hope and imagination.

This is illustrated in the dog, hunting after, and barking at some object evidently conceived to be of that kind, which, by instinct, he desires,

or hopes, to obtain :—and, by the little kitten worrying and tossing the moving leaf.

But man has nobler powers,—and what youth has not pictured to himself the scenes and objects of his future happiness, after successful efforts in attaining them ?—If he has desired wealth in mercantile pursuits, imagination, under the influence of his hope, has painted before him, his ship returning home, laden with the wealth of India, or Peru, or California. If a lawyer, the judge has been often heard, in imagination's ear, to decide the case in his favor; and the fees of wealthy, and well-satisfied clients, have gladened his eye; and the praises of the press applauded the power of his argument.

In this view, we may almost say, that hope has deluded and destroyed as many as she has blessed. Always necessary, she is, at the same time, dangerous. But she must be encouraged, and directed,—not destroyed. For "all industry must be excited by hope."*

This emotion also implies that difficulties are to be met and overcome, and that success is somewhat contingent, and depends on causes of which the subject of it neither does, nor can have, the entire control. So that, he is, and must be, in some degree, the subject of a salutary appre-

*Johnson's Works, Vol. 5, p. 292. Rambler, No. 117.

hension, or fear, lest, after all his best efforts, he may not succeed. Hope is thus the correlative, or opposite of fear,—and the great and perhaps only antidote to despair.

It is this fact that makes it essentially important for us, on all subjects, and in all pursuits, carefully to regard and conform to its conditions. So that we may be able to give to every one that asketh us, a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.

Else, one may be too sanguine. He may hope to succeed, without faithfully, and perseveringly conforming to the true laws or conditions of success, in its relations to the object he is desirous of attaining, and for which he ardently strives.

For,—it should never be forgotten, that we, ourselves, in the exercise of those sublime and awful faculties, which constitute the image of God within us, can direct and regulate this wonderful power.

II. In other words, there are certain conditions of a good and stable hope in the mind of man. Conditions, which every one,—and especially every young man,—as he sets out, sanguine, on the journey of life, should carefully regard, and with the help and blessing of God, sedulously and faithfully fulfil.

One of these, which, because it pervades all the others, and is common to them all, requires

to be named first, and by itself, is,—that every one bear in mind the changes and uncertainties of this life. These are such, that, while we have the highest reasons for hope, in the diligent use of the appropriate means, we have not the least ground for presumption or negligence. "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill." He who begins by indulging hope, without thus duly recognizing the possibility of difficulty, and final failure in the attainment of his merely earthly ends, is in great danger of soon giving up to discouragements,—and ending in disappointment and despair.

It is best,—it is, indeed, absolutely necessary, to the highest degree of success in life, for every young man to come to the conclusion, that he is called to live and act his part, in a world of trial. His motto should be that of Burke, who said, "Nitor in adversum,"—I struggle against difficulties, "is the motto for a man like me."

One who thus clearly, and firmly, recognises this condition;—who thus, as a lawyer would say, looks at all "the facts in the case,"—has the great advantage of having well weighed difficulties, before he begins to act. If you will excuse the familiarity of the expression, for the sake of its appropriateness, he has learned "*to*

face the music,"—in the stern battle of life. He looks the dangers that threaten him in the face. He has counted the cost. And, I may add,—in the anticipation of a point in our subject, hereafter to be presented more fully,—he has learned, in the possible contingency of an utter failure of natural and earthly expectations, not, for a moment, to despair; but to fortify himself, in the exercise also of bright and indestructible MORAL anticipations, which shall ever be in his soul, as an anchor, sure and stedfast,—or, to change the figure, like a phenix, rising out of the ashes of all earthly and temporal disappointments!

Hope, indeed, is the daughter of desire and difficulty. Its very existence implies some danger of losing the good it desires, inculcating a diligent use of means to make it sure. If there were not some danger and difficulty, there might be confident expectation; but it would cease to be hope. And thus we might argue the reality of an imperfect state of things in this world prompting us to seek for a better, from the very idea and existence of this emotion.

This is finely expressed by Thomas Campbell, who may truly and worthily be called the bard of Hope, in these lines:—

> "Primeval Hope, the Aonian Muses say,
> When man and nature mourned their first decay;
> When every form of death, and every woe,

Shot from malignant stars to earth below;
When Murder bared his arm, and rampant War
Yoked the red dragons of her iron car;
When Peace and Mercy, banished from the plain,
Sprung on the viewless winds to heaven again;
All, all forsook the friendless, guilty mind,
But hope, the charmer, lingered still behind!"

"Thus, while Elijah's burning wheels prepare
From Carmel's height to sweep the fields of air,
The prophet's mantle, ere his flight began,
Dropped on the world—a sacred gift to man!"

In further illustrating the conditions of a reasonable and good hope,—it is important to notice that there are four divisions of human nature, or departments of human activity,—which we may advantageously consider, as being pervaded by the influence of this emotion;—and which, as one or the other may predominate, give to it, its character, as reasonable or unreasonable,—pure or polluting.

These divisions are the physical, the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual; corresponding to the spirit, soul, and body of man;—as these distinctions between the several parts of our nature have been, and are made by some distinguished mental philosophers. Whether they have any real foundation in fact, or not,—and I think they have,—they will serve sufficiently to give system and clearness to our subject, at this time.

We shall illustrate the conditions of a reasonable and good hope in each of them. Premis-

ing, however, that as the rain-bow of nature, to which the visions of hope are often compared, consists of mingled colors, of different hues, which, blending with one another, constitute its beauty: so, these several departments, as they shall be presented, will be found necessarily to blend with one another; and require that we should remember they are essentially distinct, while we are looking at them together,—without any prismatic division of their rays.

1. The first condition of a good hope, in either of these several departments, is,—that the departments themselves be kept in their proper relations to each other. The inferior, or less important, being properly subordinated, in all its exercises, to that which is, and ought to be supreme. And thus all be made to exert their influences harmoniously, and in proper degrees of power on one-another, and on the whole man.

The spiritual should be supreme; and the moral, the intellectual, and the physical follow in their order; like the several elements of iron, smelted and welded together, and exerting that natural influence on each other, which alone can constitute the solid anchor of a lasting hope.

2. Premising this, there are hopes connected with the physical nature of man, the conditions of which must be fulfilled.

Of these, one of the strongest, and almost the

last to cease its power in the soul,—certainly the last of a physical and earthly kind, is the hope of natural life. How tenaciously this keeps its hold even in the decay often of nature, crumbling into pieces around it!—especially in young, and consumptive persons. This hope, to be reasonable and healthy, requires, under the guidance of the moral and intellectual faculties, a faithful regard to the laws of health. Otherwise, the unregulated predominance of the appetites, or even of the intellectual and moral powers, may nip it in its bud, and leave it to wilt and wither. Our efforts in a good cause may prevent its fruition, and destroy it. And that was wise advice, which one of the gifted poets of our own city, before one of our kindred associations, once gave to those who listened to his song :—

"Work like a man, but don't be worked to death."

Moral and intellectual principle must restrain and govern the sinews of industry itself, or the hopes that excite it to effort will kill it as it works! Thanks be to the God of nature! He Himself assists us, here, by His ordinances. And, by letting fatigue and drowsiness creep over the too active body and mind, He causes them to fall, when overworked, into the arms of,—

"Tired nature's swēet restorer, balmy sleep!"

But nature herself may be so overtasked, as to drive away sleep, as she would fain come to her relief. Even our spiritual nature, unregulated by truth; or our intellectual faculties, overworked; as well as the senses themselves, intemperately indulged,—may break those laws, obedience to which is the only condition of the reasonable hope of natural life. And a young man may, by over-exertion, excite the hectic of disease on the cheek of a too vigorous endeavor, and sink too soon into an early grave! Have you not seen such? Have you not seen over-exertion wilt the fairest promise of a youth, who foolishly disregarded those natural laws, of which we speak; and who presumed to imagine that he might more quickly realize his hopes, notwithstanding their infraction? Moral and intellectual principle must moderate and guide the panting zeal of labor, or its overstrained ardor will crack the sinews of hope!

There is too, sometimes, great danger that a young man, when worn down by long-continued effort, and visited, as all are prone to be, in a world of trial, by disappointments incident to it, or pressed by care, shall resort to physical stimulants, to recruit his exhausted spirits, and keep up a false and only temporary exhilaration. Wine, or tobacco, or even opium have, in this way, sometimes been the resort of the weary, or the disappointed. Alas! such helps are like

the songs of the fabled syrens of the deep in the ear of the two credulous mariner. They allure, only to hurt, and possibly to destroy!

We have seen a young man begin business with "troops of friends" around him; and Hope, so to speak, beckoning him onward to success. But, in an evil hour, he began to indulge his appetites in free-living, and in the use of the most common stimulants. His features, once glowing in health, became flushed; an air of bloatedness began gradually to show itself; careless and irregular companions were seen with him; the trifling levity, which reminds one of the laughter which is mad, and in the midst of which the heart is sorrowful, began to appear in him; until, at last, we have heard of his sudden failure,—attended, it may be, by some act of dishonor. The bud of his hope was blighted in its earliest swellings, and it never bloomed! The hearts that loved him were left desolate! The kindest efforts made to save him from disgrace and ruin were all lost! Such an one has reminded us of a picture, somewhat common, in which an innocent youth appears, fresh from his father's and his mother's blessing, beautiful and promising, in his early health. In the second scene, there is a slight appearance of a too free indulgence in his somewhat swollen features. Then, there is the loose air of the debauchee. Next comes the sparkling decanters,—the fra-

grant cigar,—the boon companions;—and a little farther on, the thread-bare coat, and garments of decaying richness;—then disease,—the poor-house,—rags,—and an opening grave!—

> Picture too true to life! yet kindly drawn,
> If it but warn the unwary!—

But hope, nursed by desire, sustained and guided by reason and faith, from all undue despondency, is a spiritual stimulus far superior to all those of a physical kind, to which the buffeted and tried sons of men can ever resort. This, with a clear conscience,—and a determined will, trusting in God, to try our best,— is the true wine of the soul! This is the anodyne that lulls the weary to repose, without waking with languid and exhausted powers, and shattered nerves! This is the stimulus that excites without producing subsequent depression, or any pang of conscientious remorse, to harrow the sensibilities of the soul!

There is yet another form of sensual indulgence in which the brightest and best hopes of the young have been, alas! too often sacrificed, which, in passing, must at least be named. How can I name it better, and more briefly, on this occasion, than by quoting a single stanza from Robert Burns, in his "epistle to a young friend?"—

> "The sacred flame o' weel-plac'd love,
> Luxuriantly indulge it;

But never tempt the illicit rove,
Though nothing should divulge it:
I waive the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But och! it hardens all within,
And petrifies the feeling!"

3. In considering hope, in its relations to our intellectual nature, I shall illustrate its conditions so as to exhibit its influence on the calling, or profession, a young man may choose in life; and in following which he may insure his highest earthly happiness and usefulness.

An essential condition of it, in this view, is, that he should have one main occupation for life; and should cleave to it, making all others subservient to it;—thus causing this to become the centre around which all his knowledge shall accumulate and increase,—like the successive layers about the nucleus of a beautiful chrystal; ever reflecting, in hues of splendor, the rays of truth, to the eye of the admiring beholder.

The old classic mottos, or proverbs:—"Non omnia possumus omnes,"*—which may be freely translated,—we are not all equal to the same things:—and the wise advice of Apelles: "Ne sutor supra crepidam,"†—let no cobler go beyond his own last,—are not, in their true spirit, and when fairly considered, contracted, or narrow-minded pieces of advice; but really inculcate

* Virgil, Ecl. 8, v. 63. † Plinii Opera, Lib. 35. cap. 10.

principles of the most benevolent and comprehensive wisdom.

For, as the remark is at least as old as the age of Cicero, that the various parts of all truth are bound together by a common bond, or vinculum; we may, in attending to only one object for life, increasingly associate all other branches of knowledge with it; and habitually consider it in its relations to them, so as neither to become contracted in our views, nor neglect to make whatever attainments we may be able, in branches of good learning, not immediately connected with it. In this way, our one employment in life really becomes a centre, around which we may gather all our knowledge, even of the most multiform and comprehensive kinds.

In the common business of life, too, an intelligent and energetic hope leads to the faithful study of the laws, or principles of our calling, whatever it may be. Hope sustains the laboring mind, as it strives after success; so that it shall be able to endure the continual effort of obtaining a knowledge of facts, and of faithfully comparing and combining them, until the calling we pursue, whatever it be, shall be reduced to the fixedness and beauty of a science in our mind.

I say a science,—because I am fond of imagining, what has not perhaps been sufficiently considered, that every occupation of human

life,—not excepting the humblest among men, is capable of being elevated, by a diligent collection and combination of all the facts respecting it, under the influence of hope, into the dignity of a science.

For, what is a science?—if it be not the reduction, or condensation, so to speak, of all the facts discovered in any one department of human effort, into general laws, to be remembered and used for our guidance, in all such occupations; and which, as they shall be thus recollected and used, must, in the same circumstances, lead to success.

Yes! let the wood-sawyer, who labors in our streets, hopefully and diligently use and combine, all the facts he may gather,—by reading, observation, and experience,—respecting the kinds of wood, the metal, and the other materials, he may use in his humble calling; and will any one say, that in process of time, he may not, humble though he be, elevate his occupation into a scientific dignity; which, by that common vinculum, that binds all the parts of human knowledge together, may shed its own unpretending, but not useless ray, into the glories of the highest human attainments, and help in contributing to their advancement?

In this way a taste for reading, and for intelligent, and improving intercourse with fellowmen, will, under the influence of the ardent

hope of improvement, do much for the usefulness of a young man.

A taste for reading and for literary conversation is not only thus produced, by the influence of an ever prevalent hope of success, in acquiring a knowledge of our respective occupations in life. But, as a young man reads and converses, there is a reaction of these upon that; and his hope brightens. The means and the prospect of attaining the ends he hopes for increase and expand before him; and he is greatly stimulated to persevere and be energetic.

Have you not already experienced, my young friends, something of this influence, as you have visited the rooms of your association, and your library, and conversed with each other, on subjects connected with your respective professions or employments? As iron sharpeneth iron, have not you animated each other, as you have thus met, face to face?

The possession and reading of good books, in private too, surrounds you, though in solitude, with the best companions; the thoughts and emotions of whose minds you enjoy, without being the witnesses of their infirmities and faults, when living. We may say of reading, what has been well said of education, of which it is the principal means:—"It is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no clime destroy, no enemy alienate, no despotism en-

slave; at home a friend, abroad an introduction; in solitude a solace, in society an ornament. It chastens vice; it guides virtue; it gives at once a grace and government to genius."

Let me also add here, that as the power and influence of hope greatly depend on the mind's being mainly intent on one object of pursuit; and the reasonable expectation of success greatly depends on this;—so also a young man who would give a good reason for his hope, should choose and pursue that calling in life, for which he has the warmest affection, and the best natural gifts.

Usually, that which he most desires to do, is perhaps the best indication of that for which he has the best natural gift. Since capacity often, if not always, excites desire. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee," is therefore as truly a maxim of a wise philosophy, looking at the facts of observation and experience, as it is of Christian faith. And, it is as applicable to every young man, whatever be his employment, as it originally was to young Timothy, as a preacher of the gospel.

Let, then, every young man strive, diligently, to discover his gift, and ascertain in what may consist "the hiding of his power." Let him faithfully cherish and invigorate it, by continued and persevering use. Then, hope, influenced by desire, shall ever impel him onward; painting

the end he would attain in bright hues before him; rendering him superior to discouragement and despair; and crowning him, at last, with the green laurel of success!

I might allude here to Sir Walter Scott's letter to his brother, respecting the choice of a profession for that brother's son:—

"If my nephew," he wrote, "is steady, cautious, fond of a sedentary life and quiet pursuits, and at the same time a proficient in arithmetic, and with a disposition towards the prosecution of its highest branches, he cannot follow a better line than that of an accountant." . . . . . "But if, which may possibly be the case, the lad has a decided turn for active life and adventure, is high-spirited, and impatient of long and dry labor, with some of those feelings not unlikely to result from having lived all his life in a camp or barrack, do not deceive yourself, my dear brother, you will never make him an accountant; you will never be able to convert such a sword into a pruning-hook, merely because you think a pruning-hook the better thing of the two."*

4. But, as we have seen, that to invigorate and regulate the hopes connected with our physical nature,—like that of natural life, for example,—our moral and spiritual faculties must come in, to modify, restrain, and guide them;

* Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, Vol. 4, p. 271.

so it must be with those of an intellectual kind. Moral and spiritual considerations must duly restrain, and guide these. Otherwise, there is a true sense, in which he that increaseth knowledge will increase sorrow. And it shall be found, that our highest intellectual acquisitions and discoveries, shall leave us destitute of the satisfaction our spirits crave, in the fruition of hope; and our energies, great as they may have been, shall prove to have been misdirected.

By our moral nature, as distinguished from our spiritual, which we shall yet consider,—though often, "like kindred drops," they "mingle into one,"—I mean, that part of our nature, which leads us to recognize the existence and moral government of God; and which, under the influence of conscience, in the light of reason, sees and feels the distinction there is between right and wrong; the duty of ever choosing the one, and refusing and hating the other; the wisdom of subjecting the less to the greater good; of acting not on selfish, but on benevolent principles; and of placing our hopes of success, not on changing and unsettled, but on immutable and firm principles of conduct and character.

Now, under the influence of such moral considerations as these, aside from those of a spiritual kind,—which we shall soon consider, and

with which they are so intimately connected,—a young man may be inspired with great energy, in striving after the fulfilment of his physical and intellectual hopes, as well as those of a moral kind. Many a man, from high and correct moral considerations, will prefer the attainment of intellectual and moral ends, before those of a merely material kind; and will thus seek objects of a moral and intellectual value, though he may make himself poor in merely sensible things,—in obtaining and enjoying them. Many a man may, and does, use a high and enlightened moral philosophy, in the indulgence of hope; so as to keep himself patient and persevering, in the midst of difficulty and danger, when otherwise, he might have yielded to murmurings, discouragement, and despair. Many a man sees and feels the policy of a liberal and benevolent course of conduct; so that, when sometimes he might seem, to a less enlightened and selfish one, to be sacrificing the objects of a present hope, he is really acting on the enlightened moral principle, that there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and that it is more blessed to give than to receive: just as Alexander is cited in one of the apothegms of Lord Bacon, and one of the discourses of John Howe,—as having, after a victory, when asked, in the profusion with which he was dividing the spoils amongst his friends and followers, what part he

intended to reserve for himself, replied "Hope! hope! I live on the hope of more!"

Thus, we have doubtless all noticed, that, from such high moral considerations as those to which I have alluded, many men, young as well as old, are really the subjects of high and purifying moral hopes, which, if rightly cherished and improved, would, there is every reason to believe, lead them to see, and feel, and act on the reasonableness and necessity of exercising those which are spiritual, as well as moral. But which, if they do not lead to those of a spiritual nature, will be found to form the character of a man, who shall possess and ever exhibit a high and unbending moral integrity towards his fellow-men; while there may be, at the same time, no heart-felt delight in the indulgence of those hopes which reach into a future state; which include in their exercise the full feelings of the heart, implying the whole current of the will, as well as the affections; and which terminate in a personal God, and Savior; whom the soul loves to acknowledge in all its ways, as the God in whom it lives, and moves, and has our being; in whose service, and for whose glory it should desire to live, and be willing to die. Thus, there are men, who, in an unimpeachable moral integrity, have had great energy, in seeking and obtaining the objects of high and virtuous earthly hopes, and who must be respected and hon-

ored by their fellow-men, of all parties and professions, accordingly; who have acquired noble ends by noble means; but who, nevertheless, if about to die, shall not have any clear and very satisfactory conceptions of a future state, and future objects; of a holy heaven, and a holy God and Savior there; nor be able to form any clear and satisfying conceptions of a future judgment and its results; nor to trace, in their habits of mind through life, a clear connection between those objects they desired and have manfully striven for, with an unimpeachable moral integrity in this world, and that state of being into which they shall enter, through the portals of the grave! On the contrary, they have been so habitually "of the earth, earthy," in their views of things, and in the nature of the objects they have pursued; they have so loved the world, and the things of the world, in the exercise of their high moral character, and corresponding moral hopes,—that their hope, with its accompanying desires and imaginings, cannot be said to have centered in those unseen and eternal objects, which a truly spiritual as well as moral hope loves to anticipate. I may confidently appeal to your own observation for the faithfulness of this picture to common life. Their views of a future state, when they are summoned to leave the objects and pursuits of this world, are so dim and obscure, so wanting

in any positive ideas they can awaken within them, that though they may even try to speculate on them, and make them palpable; they need to turn, like the Grecian Socrates, in the beautiful dialogue of Plato, after reasoning on the immortality of the soul, and ask for some other being to come and teach them!

5. My young friends!—members of this association!—Christianity, whose name your association bears, reveals to us this being! And we are thus brought to the last part of our subject, the nature and conditions of spiritual hope. This is the emotion which rightly and happily influences and guides each of the others we have noticed; explaining the disappointments by which they are so often shaken or destroyed; the trials by which they are inevitably attended;—and making those disappointments and trials contribute to increase the firmness of its own trust in the truths by which it is guided and sustained. This spiritual hope differs from that which is merely, and only moral, in the fact, that it not only recognizes, intellectually, and with the conscience also, the existence and moral government of God; and an immutable standard of right and wrong; and the duty of subordinating the merely sensual and temporary desires of our nature, to those which are intellectual, moral, and enduring. But the heart, as well as the intellect and conscience, of him by whom it

is indulged, so acknowledges God, in all his ways; and his prevailing desires, and the general determination of his will, so induce him to live, supremely, to please God; that he conforms to the conditions of moral government made known in revelation; and his hope is conformed to the highest reason, because it is conformed to the nature of things. He exercises such an affectionate sorrow for all that displeases God, and so desires to be made pure and acceptable to Him, that the way of a return to purity and salvation opened by Christianity fills him with "a hope full of immortality;" and becomes "as an anchor to his soul, sure and steadfast!" In the intelligent, heartfelt exercise of this, he sees and feels the reasonableness, and indeed the absolute necessity, of those contingencies, and frequent disappointments, and ever attendant uncertainties and fears, of all other kinds of hope, whether physical, intellectual, or even moral, indulged by man, in this world.

The truths, the objects, and the destiny, revealed by Christianity, explain, in the most satisfactory manner,—and the only satisfactory manner,—why all the hopes he indulges, other than those truly spiritual, are attended with so many trials here, and certainly must fail him at death. These truths and objects teach him what his own consciousness and observation, the more faithfully and profoundly he consults them, cor-

roborate as true, that he is prone to prefer the ends, and only passing and unsatisfying scenes of earth and time, before God and eternity. And therefore, that he needs a process of discipline and self-denial,—that he may be weaned, so to speak, from the dangerous, and to his immortal and accountable spirit, the degrading indulgence of expectations fixed only on these; and to lift his contemplations to higher, holier, more enduring, more satisfying ends of being;—to "things unseen and eternal!" In proportion as the soul embraces these great truths of Christianity, it exercises a hope, which, centering in spiritual truth, fastens the fluke of its anchor in the rock of ages; and immediately begins, by its controlling and blessed power, not to annihilate those other, and inferior hopes we have considered, but rightly to regulate them and their objects, making them subservient to its own more exalted, purifying, and eternal ends!

Thus, the objects of physical, intellectual, and even of only moral hopes,—as distinguished from those into which the elements of a spiritual Christianity enters,—are so sought, and used, as to help the hope that is spiritual to hold the soul, amid all the storms of life, to the haven of eternal rest. There the weary shall be at rest! And hope, in the exstacy and perfect bliss of love, and of present, unalloyed enjoyment, free from all untoward vicissitude and

fear, may be said to be changed into ever confiding expectation, because it is assured of its end, and ever filled with fruition, as its capacities to receive and enjoy it shall forever expand!

Earthly hopes, with their objects, thus rightly used and regulated, contribute to the energy and enjoyment of that which is spiritual! Their very disappointments help to confirm it! Whether fresh, or withered, they shall but nourish it! Somewhat as the leaves that surround and guard the bud of a flower,—enclose it for a little season,—until, as it catches, and assimilates to itself the air, and sun, and dew, and rains of heaven, the leaves that nurtured it die and wither from around it, and the flower of that hope expands, that shall bloom forever!

"Worldly hopes," writes Leighton,—"Worldly hopes are not living, but lying hopes; they die often before us, and we live to bury them, and see our own folly and infelicity in trusting to them; but, at the utmost they die with us when we die, and can accompany us no further. But the lively hope, which is the Christian's portion, answers expectation to the full, and much beyond it, and deceives no way but in that happy way of far exceeding it,—a living hope, living in death itself! The world dares say no more for its device, than *Dum spiro spero;* but the children of God can add, by virtue of this 'living hope, *Dum expiro spero.*"*

* Leighton on 1 Peter, i 3.

This hope, as a spiritual emotion,—harmonizing as it does with providence, and accepting, as its spiritual conditions, the trials and disappointments of life, as necessary difficulties to be met, and to be changed by its touch into helps, instead of being murmured at and complained of:—such hope cannot and will not ever permit the soul to yield to any kind of morbid misanthropy and despair. Its sunshine is too pure and bright to be either dissipated or darkened, by the passing cloud. So far from this, borrowing light from that future state, to which it ever looks for its own full fruition, it tinges the edges of that cloud itself with a celestial glory, and makes it add a sublime grandeur to the prospects it might otherwise have shrouded in woe! There will be no soreness, or sourness of disposition in the young man who thus intelligently cherishes a virtuous hope. Though cast down, he shall not be destroyed. The bright morning of his youthful hope shall so shed its beams into the whole day of life, that even its storms shall be pervaded by the mellowness of its light; and shall wear the bow occasioned by its sun, on their blackness as they retire, leaving a serene sky at its close!

Thus, when temporal disappointments sink the heart of man, spiritual hope shall give him adequate consolation. And when time shall have shed on him its frosts and snows; and the

winter of age shall have changed the countenance that in youth was bright, and fresh, and vigorous, as that season alters the fair face of nature; and shall call him away from all objects of earthly desire and attainment;—then, the old man shall realize visions brighter than the eye even of youthful hope had ever seen; or her pencil, dipped in the splendid hues of imagination, had ever painted; in a world, where disappointment never nips the bud, or withers the flower, or poisons the fruits of hope! And when the cold hand of death shall have shivered to atoms the frail pictures of earthly anticipations, then the visions of poetry become the facts of a blissful experience; and "saved by hope," the happy spirit of the sanguine can adopt as the song of reality, what would otherwise have been only the dream of fancy, and say:—

"Eternal Hope! When yonder spheres sublime,
Peal'd their first notes to tune the march of Time,
Thy joyous youth began—but not to fade,—
When all the sister planets have decayed!
When, rapt in fire, these realms of ether glow,
And heaven's last thunder shakes the world below;
Thou, undismayed, shalt o'er the ruins smile,
And light thy torch at Nature's funeral pile!"

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